Supplement to: Tacoma News Tribune and Sunday Ledger, Pierce County Herald, Suburban Times, Peninsula Gateway, Tacoma Facts

PIERCE TRANSIT

"We're the people who carried more passengers in 1981 than at any time in the last 25 years."

Progress Report

May 12, 1978

Pierce County elected officials call for a **Public Transportation Improvement Conference** to consider the desirability of forming an enlarged transit district in Pierce County.

March 5, 1979

A public forum is held for community leaders, and an overwhelming majority feel strongly that improved and expanded public transportation is needed.

April 2, 1979

The Public Transportation Improvement Conference passes a resolution defining boundaries for a new transit district.

Summer and Fall, 1979

Tacoma Transit staff and consultants prepare a draft transportation plan. The plan includes a system of timed transfer centers for fixed route bus service, SHUTTLE, roving van service, ridesharing, and interconnections with Olympia and Seattle. Two series of workshops are held, seven workshops each time. Support is overwhelming for a new district, sales tax funding, and the transit plan.

November 6, 1979

Pierce County voters, with a 61% "yes" vote, approve a 3/10th of one cent sales tax levy to fund operation of a new Pierce County Public Transportation Benefit Area, soon to be known as **Pierce Transit.** Areas comprising the new transit district: **Fife, Fircrest, Lakewood, Milton, Parkland, Puyallup, Ruston, South Hill, Spanaway, Steilacoom, Sumner, Tacoma,** and **University Place.**

Yoshio Kosai (1925–1980), Pierce Transit's first Executive Director

Gig Harbor new service workshop, April, 1981.

Tacoma Mall transit center workshop, July, 1981.

December, 1979

Pierce Transit's Board of Commissioners officially adopts the **Comprehensive Transit Plan,** making Pierce Transit eligible for state motor vehicle excise taxes to match sales tax collections in the transit district.

January 1, 1980

Pierce Transit assumes operation of Tacoma Transit and begins levying the 3/10ths of one cent sales tax in its area.

January 4, 1980

Pierce Transit assumes operation of Lakewood Lines.

January–June, 1980

Pierce Transit begins assuming administrative functions previously handled by the City of Tacoma, including legal counsel, personnel, purchasing, accounting, and risk management.

Spring, 1980

Over 20 neighborhood workshops are held to develop service plans for the new transit district. Mailers are sent to thousands of homes describing proposed services and asking people to help plan bus routes for their area. More than 3,000 people participate in the workshops and respond to mailers.

June, 1980

Three new bus routes inaugurate Pierce Transit service to **Puyallup, Sumner, Milton, and Fife, Federal Way, Fort Lewis** and **McChord Air Force Base.**

September, 1980

Seven new routes increase service in **Puyallup, Fircrest** and **University Place.**

October, 1980

Three new routes serve **Lakewood** and **Steilacoom,** including the VA Hospital and Ft. Steilacoom Community College.

November, 1980

New route connects **Tacoma Mall** and **Tacoma Community College.**

November, 1980

Eight more areas vote to join the transit district: **Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, East Spanaway, Gig Harbor** and the **Key Peninsula, Midland/Summit, North Puyallup/Edgewood, Oakbrook, Prairie Ridge,** and **lower South Hill.**

December, 1980

New route connects **Lakewood** with **Fort Lewis** and **McChord Air Force Base.** SHUTTLE expands to serve all of existing service area.

June, 1981

The new Pearl Street route links **Tacoma Community College** with **Ruston** and **Point Defiance.** Improvements are made in University Place service.

July, 1981

A new route connects **Lakewood** and **Puyallup.**

First Day of Service Dupont, October 12, 1981

First Day of Service, Key Center, December 21, 1981

SHUTTLE, Pierce Transit's Specialized Transportation Service

September, 1981

New route joins **Tacoma Community College** and **Lakewood.**

October, 1981

Pierce Transit's service to **DuPont** is inaugurated.

December, 1981

Pierce Transit's buses and SHUTTLE vans now reach as far as **Gig Harbor** and the **Key Peninsula** to the west and **Bonney Lake** and **Buckley** to the east.

December, 1981

Morning peak operation requires 140 buses, afternoon peak requires 144. Pierce Transit maintains 179 buses in a facility built for 85 yet no accidents were caused due to mechanical failure during 1981.

January, 1982

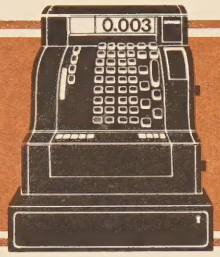
The first fare increase in 24 years. Transit riders now pay **50¢** during the peak and **25¢** during the off-peak.

January, 1982

The Pierce Transit Board of Commissioners adopts a revised accessibility policy to ensure the needs of disabled residents are met.

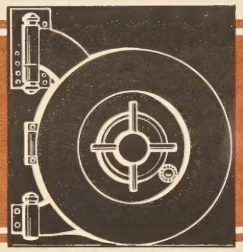
An ad hoc citizens committee continues to participate in the development of implementation plans.

1981 Revenues



Local Taxes 44%

Tax revenues include the .3% sales tax and motor vehicle excise tax. These taxes are derived from the residents of Pierce Transit's service area.



Reserves 32%

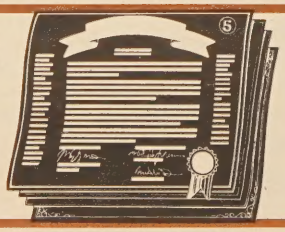
Reserves include the ending fund balance from 1980. Reserves are used to fund operation and capital acquisition expenditures. Unused funds are invested to generate income for the agency.

Operating Income 11%

Operating income includes fares, school service, charters and advertising. The principal source of operating income is the fare box.

Federal Assistance 10%

This assistance includes operating, planning, and capital support.



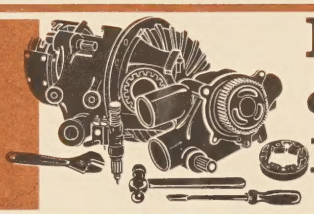
Investments 3%

Investment revenue comes from the investment of idle cash during the year. During 1981 the return has been good due to high rates in the money markets.

1981 Expenditures

Personnel 62%

Personnel expenses include a variety of costs—salaries, benefits, and uniforms associated with the agency's 430 personnel.



Maintenance & Operations 14%

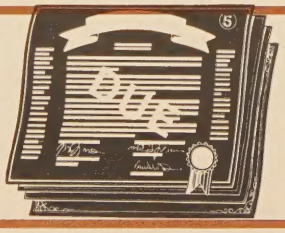
Included in this are the agency's daily cost of expendable items necessary to provide the 5.4 million miles of bus service in 1981.

Capital 10%

Capital includes the purchase in 1981 of refurbished buses, vans, radios, and miscellaneous items.

Fuel 7%

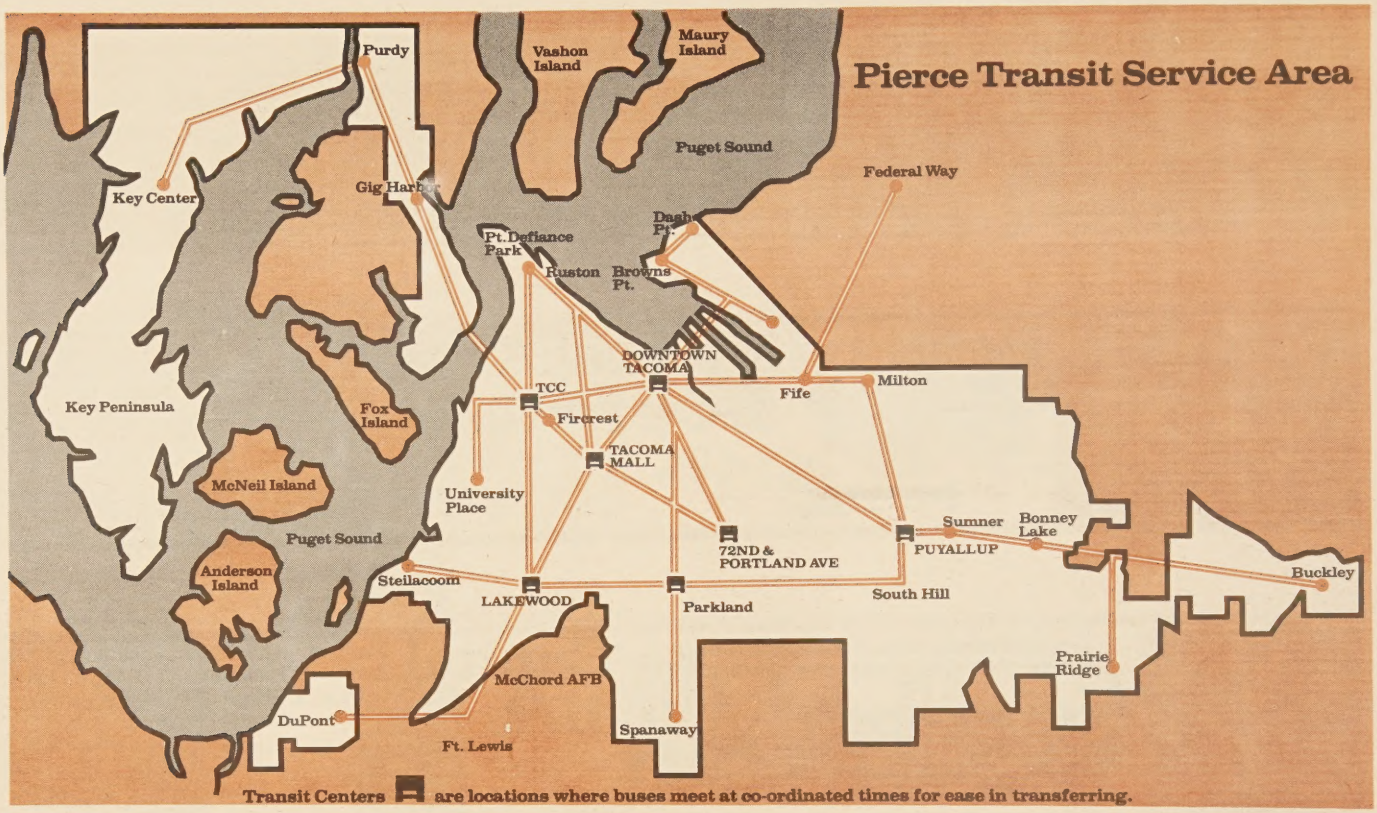
This includes the cost of fueling all the agency's vehicles including buses, vans, cars and service vehicles necessary to provide the 5.4 million miles of service.



Debt 7%

Debt service covers the principal and interest cost for the repayment of the agency's general obligation bond.

Facts & Figures about Pierce Transit



General

- 275 square miles in service area
- 422,000 population
- 12.4 million riders (1981)
- 39 bus routes cover 683 route miles
- 7 transit centers
- 179 buses
- 19 SHUTTLE vans
- 430 employees

Hours of Service

- Buses operate weekdays from 4:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. and weekends from 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.
- SHUTTLE vans operate weekdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Fares

- **50¢** weekdays before 9:00 a.m. and from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- **25¢** all other times

Telephone Information

- Routes and schedules: 593-4520
- Administrative offices: 593-4525

Monthly Passes

Pass holders may ride as often as they like during the month without paying a cash fare. Passes are sold at banks and other locations throughout the Pierce Transit service area.

Go Anywhere $20
VIP (65+ or Disabled) with ID $10
Student (18 or under) with ID. $15

Passes are sold during regular business hours at the following locations:

- **Bank of California**
- **County/City Building**
- **Public Utilities Building**
- **First Interstate Banks**
- **Ft. Steilacoom Community College**
- **Pacific Lutheran University**
- **Peoples National Banks**
- **Pierce Transit Headquarters**
- **Puget Sound National Banks**
- **Tacoma Bank**
- **Tacoma Community College**
- **University of Puget Sound**

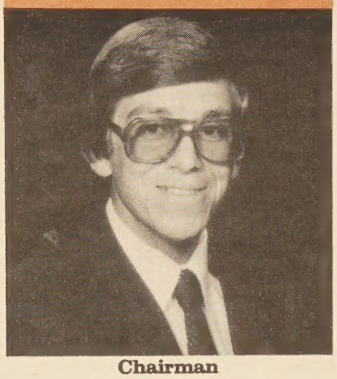
Please call 593-4520 for the sales location nearest you. Long distance callers dial 1-800-562-8109 toll free.

Pierce Transit has a seven member

Board of Commissioners

representing all sections of the service area

Tim Strege



Chairman
City of Tacoma

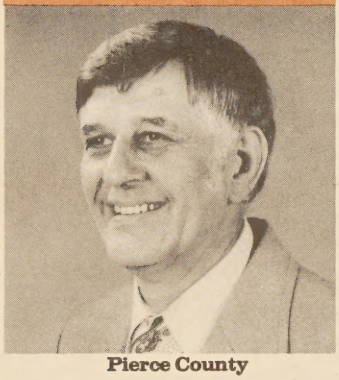
Rose Marie Raudebaugh

Vice Chairwoman
Ten Small Towns (Fircrest)

Barbara Bichsel

City of Tacoma

Jack Bujacich

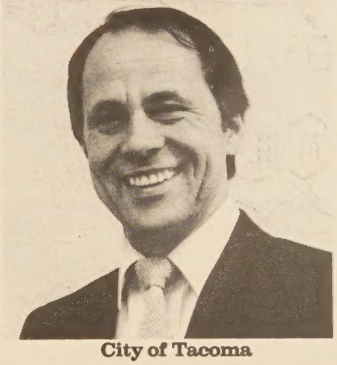


Pierce County

Joe Stortini

Pierce County

Doug Sutherland



City of Tacoma

Ann Marie Victor

City of Puyallup

Message from the Executive Director

Don Monroe
Executive Director

In our society today, transportation is not only the fourth necessity of life, it makes the other three—food, clothing and shelter—accessible.

In the two years since Pierce Transit took over the Tacoma Transit system, it has done an outstanding job in building a public transportation system that makes not only the necessities but also the pleasures of life available to the people of Pierce County. From Buckley to the Key Peninsula, from Dupont to Federal Way, our transit district residents have a real option to the multi-car family. Never before have people been able to so easily rely on public transportation. The more than 12 million riders who used public transportation in Pierce County in 1981, over 40,000 on the average weekday, testify to this fact.

It is just over two years since a strong majority voted to form a new transit district in Pierce County. I think it's significant that at a time when voters across the country are saying "no" to higher taxes, that voters in Pierce County decided to tax themselves to support public transportation. People know a strong public transportation system is important to the economic and social health of their community.

As Pierce Transit looks into the future, we combine a sense of optimism with a sense of concern. Our optimism is based on the strong and continued support shown by the people of our region for public transportation. Pierce Transit operates in an environment of strong voter support and growing ridership. Our concern is for our continued ability to provide good service in a time of rising costs and declining federal support for transit. We will have to work even harder to maintain an adequate financial base for public transportation. Your continued support will be essential if Pierce Transit is to offer the people of Pierce County the transit system it needs and wants.

Sincerely,

Don S. Monroe

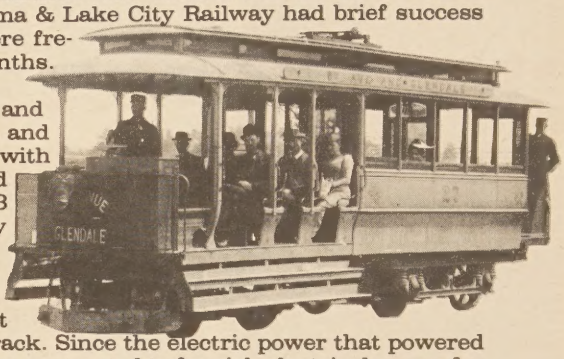
Pierce County has a long

History

of providing public transportation

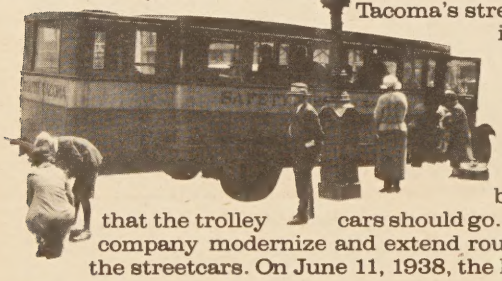
In 1888 it cost one nickel for each of the 1,111 passengers to ride Tacoma's first horse-drawn streetcar along Pacific Avenue from 13th to 7th Street. The drivers for that line and the line that traveled Tacoma Avenue to Old Town worked 10 hours a day to earn $2.00. Operating the streetcars under a franchise granted by the City Council, the Tacoma Street Railway Company brought public transportation to the community. Within two years the horses and Missouri mules which had pulled the first cars were replaced by steam engines, then electric motors.

During those early years, there were several streetcar companies. The Tacoma and Puyallup Railway, the Wapato Lake Line, the Point Defiance Railroad, the Tacoma and Steilacoom Railroad all served obvious destinations. The Tacoma Traction Line reached out to Fern Hill and Spanaway. The Tacoma & Lake City Railway had brief success carrying passengers to American Lake. These and other lines were frequently bought and sold, sometimes changing hands every few months.



From 1888 to 1893 Tacoma was a boom town with much building and expansion of all types, including the new streetcar systems. Rich and active men of the period poured money into competitive lines, often with little scrutiny of the projects. This indiscriminate building resulted in many streetcar lines, none of which were efficiently run. By 1893 or before, they were all in financial difficulties, and eventually all went bankrupt.

The Tacoma Railway and Power Company was formed in 1897 and proceeded to consolidate some of the defunct lines by purchasing the franchises and using existing track. Since the electric power that powered the system was on 24 hours a day, the Tacoma Railway was contracted to furnish electrical power for Tacoma's street lights. In 1899 the TR&P started the use of transfers, for riders changing cars. During the era of many companies, fares varied and passengers had to pay a new fare each time they changed lines.



The beginning of the end for trollies started in 1920 when 27 buses joined the TR&P fleet. They were first used on Tacoma-Puyallup runs. The buses were 17½ feet long and 7½ feet wide. (Today's Pierce Transit buses are 35–40 feet long and 8 feet wide.) Route by route, buses began to replace the street cars. By 1937 Tacoma's city council had decided that the trolley cars should go. The council passed a new Tacoma Railway & Power franchise, provided the company modernize and extend routes to new areas. TR&P ordered 87 new motor coaches to replace the streetcars. On June 11, 1938, the last line was changed to bus operation.

World War II was a hectic time for what was by then called the Tacoma Transit System. Transit patronage increased 25% at a time when tires were not available and gas was rationed. Men were going into the armed forces, so there was a driver shortage. In 1943, to alleviate the problem, the first two women drivers joined the system. Eventually this number grew to 24, but by 1948 only one remained. Today, 38 women drive Pierce Transit buses.

By the early 1950's, ridership had declined and the reason was easy to see. Automobile ownership had doubled in the ten years since the start of the war. The company had difficulty making fares cover operating expenses, and in 1954 the employees bought the beleagured system for $2,000,000. The adult fare was increased from 20¢ to 25¢ in March 1958, where the base fare remains today, 24 years later. The employees could not make the company turn a profit, and in 1960 the City of Tacoma bought the transit system for $750,000.

In 1980, following area voters' creation of Pierce Transit, the new agency began operating the city transit system's 116 buses. Within a month Lakewood Transit, a private bus company, was incorporated into the system, and in seven months Pierce Transit took over private service to Puyallup and Sumner. The system expanded its routes and ridership increased by 4 million passengers, from 8.6 million in 1979 to 12.6 million in 1981, in just two years.